

Message Text

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61

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 EB-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 RSR-01 /114 W

----- 047187

R 252214 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 284

INFO USCINCSO

UNCLAS LA PAZ 3858

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PGOV BL

SUBJ: " CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" IS RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM

REF: LA PAZ 3828

BEGIN SUMMARY. PRESIDENT BANZER' S ANNOUNCEMENT JUNE 22 OF THE FORTHCOMING " CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" OF THE COUNTRY IS 1974 WAS RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM IN ALL MAJOR SECTORS OF PUBLIC OPINION. POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OUTSIDE THE FPN, QUALIFIED THEIR SUPPORT FOR AN ELECTORAL SOLUTION WITH REQUESTS SUCH AS REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL LAW, A GENERAL AMNESTY AND THE NAMING OF A MILITARY CABINET TO ENSURE FAIR ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. INITIAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT BANZER' S JUNE 22 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE " CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" OF THE COUNTRY IN 1974 HAS BEEN HIGHLY FAVORABLE IN ALL MAJOR SECTORS OF PUBLIC OPINION. THE ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION GIVEN TO THE PRESIDENT' S STATEMENT RESULTED, IN PART, FROM THE SURPRISE NATURE OF THE ELECTORAL SOLUTION; PRIOR TO THE SPEECH, MOST POLITICAL OBSERVERS HAS ESTIMATED THAT A RETURN TO NORMAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND ELECTIONS WAS AT LEAST TWO YEARS AWAY.

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2. POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES AND FACTIONS RECEIVED THE ANNOUNCEMENT WITH UNIFORM APPROVAL. LEADERS OF NON- FPN PARTIES TENDED, HOWEVER, TO ADD CONDITIONS TO THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN 1974. THUS, BENJAMIN MIGUEL, LEADER OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC), GAVE STRONG BACKING TO THE NEED FOR ELECTIONS, BUT ADDED HIS VIEW THAT THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRECONDITIONS MUST BE REALIZED BEFORE ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD: (1) A GENERAL POLITICAL AMNESTY; (2) FORMULATION OF A NEW ELECTORAL LAW; AND (3) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ELECTORAL BOARD UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES. CARLOS VALVERDE BARBERY, SELF- PROCLAIMED " CHIEF" OF THE FSB, ALSO SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT' S ELECTORAL PLAN WHILE PROPOSING THE INTRODUCTION OF REFORMS TO THE CURRENT ELECTORAL LAW. JAIME ARELLANO CASTENEDA, LEADER OF A DISSIDENT FACTION OF THE MNR, FURTHER PROPOSED THE FORMATION OF A MILITARY CABINET TO GUARANTEE THE NEUTRALITY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. FROM BUENOS AIRES, EX- PRESIDENT JUAN JOSE TORRES ALSO REQUESTED A TOTAL POLITICAL AMNESTY " IF BANZER IS SINCERELY INTERESTED IN CONSTITUTIONALIZING THE COUNTRY." AMONG THE OTHER PARTY LEADERS WHO HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED " CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" PROCESS ARE ALBERTO CRESPO GUTIERREZ (PSD), MARIO G. RODRIGUEZ AND GERMAN VARGAS MARTINEZ (PIR), EDMUNDO VASQUEZ (PURS), VICTOR HUGO QUINTEROS (PRA), VICTOR HOZ DE VILA (PRB) AND RUBEN ARIAS ALVIS (PUNB).
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LAPAZ03858
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730627/aaaajlxw.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 LA PAZ 3828
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Oct-2001 by phillir0>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2002 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980223
Subject: " CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" IS RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM
TAGS: PGOV, BL
To: ARA
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO USCINCSO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005